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OUR IGNORANCE OF ALASKA.

BY KATE FIELD.

AMERICAN citizens, living comfortably on the Atlantic seaboard, knowing their own wants and dictating terms to their submissive representatives, take little heed of those new additions to the United States which are destined to be the crowning glory of the Republic. When a nation is so big as to render portions of it a *terra incognita* to those who make the laws, there's something rotten this side of Denmark !

Congressional ignorance of the Pacific Slope, alas ! is no new story. Why should pygmies realize what giants failed to know ? When Daniel Webster towered in the Senate, he crushed under foot a proposition to establish a mail route between Independence, Missouri, and the mouth of the Columbia River, some 3,000 miles across plains and mountains. After generally denouncing the measure, Webster exclaimed :

“ What do we want with this vast, worthless area ? this region of savages and wild beasts, of deserts of shifting sands and whirlwinds of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs ? To what use could we ever hope to put these great deserts or those endless mountain ranges, impenetrable, and covered to their very base with eternal snow ? What can we ever hope to do with the western coast, a coast of 8,000 miles, rock-bound, cheerless, uninviting, and not a harbor on it ? What use have we for this country ? ”

What use, indeed, have we for Kansas and Colorado and Montana and Oregon and Washington Territory and California, and that wonderful rock-bound coast “ with not a harbor on it ” ? Shade of Massachusetts’ great Senator, look down upon San Diego and the Golden Gate, gaze upon land-locked Puget Sound with its thousand miles of harbor, and blush—if shades can blush—at your old mortal blindness !

The march of Empire goes on in spite of human fallibility, and now the land of the midnight sun knocks at the door of Congress. She is twenty-three years old and asks to be treated as

though she were of age. The big-wigs at Washington rub their eyes, put on their spectacles, and wonder what this Hyperborean hubbub means? What does "an Indian country"—as Attorney-General Williams called it—want?

Said a citizen of Alaska to Miss Scidmore not long ago: "If those Senators and Congressmen don't know any more about the tariff and the other things they help to discuss than they do about Alaska, the Lord help the rest of the United States! Their ignorance of the commonest facts of geography would disgrace any little Siwash at Fort Wrangel school. What have they paid for all these special government reports for, if they don't ever read them when they get ready to speak on a foreign subject, to say nothing of what can be found in the encyclopaedias and geographies?"

"Alaska is good for everything," exclaimed Seward twenty years ago. "Alaska is good for nothing," retorted General Thomas. A Congressional committee, on reporting the bill for its purchase, sneeringly referred to "that latest and most questionable of National real-estate speculations," while the Press pointed with derision to that "tag-end of creation," "our new possession of Walrussia"!

General McDowell, never visiting Alaska and therefore unbiassed by personal knowledge, declared that, if no purchaser could be found, our government would be wise to give away "Walrus-sia" "to some country that would fulfill the Russian treaty obligations." General McDowell evidently sympathized with a relative of Lord Aberdeen who, coming from England, years ago, to inspect the Pacific coast, became greatly enraged because salmon would not rise to a fly, and reported that "the whole country was not worth a damn!" This intelligent envoy, as well as General McDowell, might have listened with amazement had they been present in the Dominion Parliament when, in 1878, the Honorable Mr. Bunster, with more foresight than our own countrymen, told a different tale.

"Honorable gentlemen might laugh, but looking at the matter from a national point of view, he fully meant what he said from his knowledge of the country, that the territory of Alaska possessed a more genial climate than Ottawa, notwithstanding its latitude, while its natural resources and capabilities were more valuable than people had any idea of. When honorable members of this house sneered at Alaska, he had a right to speak from his own personal knowledge, and tell them that they were mistaken; and the day was not far distant when, from the geographical position of this country, they would see the force of his remarks on this subject. The

lease of Alaska was more than enough to pay one million dollars annually. It was the best investment the United States had ever made."

A cent an acre ought to be a good investment. What other portion of the United States has cost as little?

General McDowell's advice was not taken. Fortunately, Alaska was not given away. It has only been thrown away—so far as development is concerned. First came a military occupation, a few troops being sent to Sitka, the capital, on Baranof Island; to Wrangel, Tongas, and St. Paul. With the purchase of Alaska, Sitka became transformed. The town that once held a thousand Russians, a governor and his staff, a bishop with his train of priests, was deserted save by Indians and a few hundred Creoles and half-breeds, who from that day to this have remained in complete ignorance of the government to which they owe allegiance. San Francisco is the only town in the United States of which the majority ever heard.

In 1869 the Aleuts sent the following petition to Washington:

"We beg respectfully of the United States Government, and of our fellow-citizens all over the Republic, to regard us not as Indians,—we are not such,—but as fellow-citizens, struggling to advance in civilization, and to become worthy to be esteemed as fellow-citizens of the Republic."

The simple people of the Aleutian Islands appealed in vain.

Not very long after (August 20, 1870) General Jeff. C. Davis, commanding the Department of Alaska, reported to the Secretary of War that

"the natives of Alaska are peaceful, honest, and capable of transacting ordinary business quite well, and would doubtless improve themselves if they had a fair chance, but their present complete enslavement and robbery by an unscrupulous ring of speculators will ever prevent such progress."

Ten years of no government and military occupation brought to Sitka and the Alexander Archipelago rum and ruin—nothing more.

The year 1794 saw the first vessel built and launched in Alaskan waters. It left the primitive stocks inspired by Governor Baranof, and was christened "The *Phœnix*." In 1878 Sitka could no more have built a ship than it could have built the Pyramids. Everything had gone to decay. Both mind and matter were mildewed, and Sitka's only wharf was so out of repair, owing to being eaten by that mischievous marine, the *teredo navalis*, that it would have tumbled into the water had not \$39.40, collected by the army as a wharf fund, been expended in repairs. To-day that same wharf is so dilapidated as to be almost use-

less. Passengers from the steamers are generally landed from a tug. The primitive plough-shares formerly sold to the indolent rancheros of California and Mexico were manufactured at Sitka's ship-yard, as were axes, spades, hatchets, and hoes. The bells of the Pacific coast missions, many still in existence, were cast at the Sitka foundry. The knell of that Russian foundry was tolled long ago.

After the withdrawal of the military, Alaska was left without any government whatever, save the occasional presence of a revenue cutter, whereupon Gouverneur Morris, special agent, made such representations as should have received attention but did not.

"The policy of the government towards Alaska," wrote Mr. Morris, "has been a disgrace. Instead of encouraging emigration and a development of the resources of the country, enterprise has been discouraged." "There is no law," he continued, "for the recordation of conveyances. A man cannot sell a piece of property and give a deed for it which will be legal notice to third parties."

Under such conditions, of course, no land could be mortgaged.

"A man may be murdered in Alaska, his will forged, and his estate scattered to the four corners of the earth, and there is no power in a court of chancery to redress it."

Thoroughly desperate at the lack of government in the Territory, Deputy-Collector J. C. Dennis, stationed at Fort Wrangel, wrote June 15, 1878, to Collector Morris, asking to be relieved:

"I take this step on account of the manner in which the department is running this Territory."

"I have acted in the capacity of arbitrator, adjudicator, and peace-maker until forbearance has ceased to be a virtue. Within the past month one thousand complaints by Indians have been laid before me for settlement, and as I am neither Indian agent nor justice of the peace, I decline the honor of patching up Indian troubles for any time longer than can be obviated."

"Again, the prospect for Congress to extend law and order over this country looks gloomy, and in the absence of law at this port, no compensation that the government could offer me would be any inducement for me to act in the capacity of deputy collector another year."

The only recommendation the Secretary of the Treasury made to the Forty-fifth Congress in behalf of neglected Alaska was that the port of Sitka should be abolished! This document is well worth reading.

"Since the withdrawal of the troops from Alaska last Spring, the management of the Territory has practically devolved upon the Treasury Department. The only officers who could exercise any authority were the collector of customs at Sitka and his deputies stationed at other points within the Territory, the duties of the officers at the Seal Islands being confined exclusively to the protection of the seal interests. It was feared that the sudden withdrawal of the troops might result in a

conflict between the whites and the Indians; but thus far little disturbance has occurred. The white population at Sitka is very limited, and the expense of maintaining customs officers there and at other points within the Territory has aggregated, within the past two years, \$17,418.32, while the receipts from customs have, during the same period, been very much less. It is, therefore, recommended that the port of Sitka be abolished."

"Here's wisdom for you—chunks of it," as Jack Bunsby would remark. Gouverneur Morris truly rejoined that the Alaskan district was not one of revenue, but of protection. If trade had fallen off since the days of the tyrant Czar, whose fault was it? With such reasoning as the honorable Secretary's, would not many a postal route be abandoned? And the Secretary, after stating that the only officers in Alaska who could exercise authority were the collector of customs and his deputies, virtually recommended their dismissal!

Such was the criminal inaction of the Government which contented itself with drawing \$317,000 annually from two small seal islands, leaving the rest of the country to fate. Nor were the people much enlightened by the literary pabulum prepared by experts.

"And so," wrote H. W. Elliott in 1877, "we took Alaska ten years ago, just as a big boy takes a strange toy, full of great satisfaction, and fired with the intense desire to investigate its inner workings, and, like the boy, we have made the examination, and we have laid the toy aside. How we pitied the ignorance of our Russian friends, who declared, in response to our call for information regarding its natural resources, that they had been so engrossed in the one idea of getting furs, that they really 'did not know of anything else'; and after ten seasons of careful inquiry we find, too, that we to-day don't know of anything else."

"However, though we have lost the wild apples of Sitka, and have failed to see the shimmer of golden fields of corn at Kodiak, yet we have much to please and far more to interest us in Alaska. It is a paradise for the naturalist, a happy hunting-ground for the ethnologist, a new and boundless field for the geologist, and the physical phenomena of its climate are something wonderful to contemplate. It is, and will be for years to come, a perfect treasure-trove for these gentlemen; but alas! it bids fair, from what we now know, never to be a treasure-trove for the miner or the agriculturist."

"Never" is so long a word as to make me wonder at its use by intelligence. That "never" employed by Mr. Elliott is certainly embarrassing when Juneau, a town of 1,000 inhabitants, is almost entirely populated by miners, and 150 miners are wintering (1887) in the valley of the Yukon, with the prospect of being joined in the spring by 500 more..

"If gold or silver is discovered in Alaska," predicts Mr. Elliott, "it must be of unusual richness or it will never support any considerable body of men up there, so far away from the sources of necessary supply. The reputed Alaska gold mines are not in Alaska at all, but on the Stikine River in British Columbia, being over 180 miles to the eastward of the boundary between the two districts; but as the Stikine River, to reach the Pacific with its rapid flood, has to pass through thirty miles of

Alaskan soil and rock, so the miners visit Alaska in this way only, as they go up and down the river from Cassiar to Victoria, the Sound, and California every spring."

Strange that Mr. Elliott should have so emphatically committed himself in 1877 when gold was discovered near Sitka in 1871 by a soldier named Doyle! It is unfortunate, too, for this gentleman that the most successful mine to-day in Alaska is "The Treadwell," the grade of which is exceedingly low, but which can be profitably worked on account of the facility in getting at it! What is true of "The Treadwell" will be more or less true of many other mines on Douglas Island, which is becoming an extended mining-camp. Nicholas Haley, of Sitka, was almost simultaneous with Doyle in finding gold, and he, as well as other Sitkans, expresses profound faith in the mineral richness of the neighboring islands.

Alaska is the land of topsy-turvy. Heretofore, placer mines have always been found in the beds of streams and in valleys. In Alaska they have been found on the top of a mountain one thousand feet high, as well as in the valley of the Yukon. Indians report gold in the mountain passes of the Chilkat River, while its color has been found near the mouth. The latest discovery of gold quartz is on the island of Unga.

The precious metals, however, are not Alaska's sole mining attractions. Coal and iron abound on the Chilkat River. In fact, there are evidences of coal on many parts of the coast, but only two mines are at present in operation, one being in the Arctic at Cape Lisburn. Years ago Professor Davidson, of the Coast Survey, discovered coal, which pervades an entire range of hills, the very dust of which adheres to the magnet. These hills extend thirty miles along the east bank of the Chilkat River. That there is copper in Alaska no observer can doubt. One hundred years ago Captain Dixon wrote of large circular wreaths of copper, both at Norfolk Sound (now Sitka) and Queen Charlotte's Islands, twisted into that shape by the natives themselves, who wore them as ornaments about their necks. Copper River is so called because of the metal found there that resembles the copper of Lake Superior. The Thlinkets possessed the art of forging this copper long before the advent of Europeans. Nor is lead an unknown quantity, while sulphur, galena, graphite, platina, marble, and cinnabar are known to exist. Petroleum has been discovered at Katenay on the main land opposite Kodiak Island.

In agriculture Alaska is not promising, but the country is by no means as impossible in this respect as it has been represented. "There is not an acre of grain in the whole territory," wrote Whymper. Because there was no grain grown it by no means follows that grain cannot be grown in certain localities. Hundreds of acres of land near Wrangel can be drained and cultivated. The Indians on the neighboring islands raise tons of potatoes and turnips for their own consumption. Butter made for me by the Scotch housekeeper of Wrangel mission was a sweet boon, and proved that cows were a success in that region, and that dairies were a mere question of time.

Let us return to Mr. Elliott's prophecies of ten years ago.

"Several 'patriots' living on Puget Sound and in Oregon have been urging some legislation by Congress which would result in creating a few offices up there, but they have met with deserved failure thus far. . . . Though we know now that Alaska will never be, in all human probability, the land for us, yet we have one great comfort in its contemplation, for we shall never be obliged to maintain costly mail routes or appoint the ubiquitous postmaster there. We shall never be asked by its people for a Territorial form of government with its attendant Federal expenses, and much as the coast looms up on the map, we shall never have to provide light-houses for its vacant harbors."

More "Nevers"! Five years after these predictions (1882) a few postal routes were established and "the ubiquitous postmaster" invaded Alaska. In 1883 Senator Harrison introduced a bill to provide a civil government for Alaska. Amended, it passed both houses and was signed by the President in May, 1884. Now the Territory has a governor, a district judge, a district attorney, a marshal, four deputy marshals, and four commissioners.

The bill of 1883 called for the enforcement of the laws of Oregon when applicable. As Oregon, however, is an inland State, and as Alaska, so far as settled, happens to be entirely seaboard, the laws do not properly apply. No land laws were passed, but it was conceded that Indians or other persons should not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use or occupation or then claimed by them. The mining laws of the United States were adopted. Here at least was a gain. Criminals, too, were no longer taken to Oregon for trial, at great waste of time, money, and patience. Verily, we are a most economical nation! We begrudge the establishment of a collector of customs at Sitka on account of a deficit in the revenue, and send criminals fifteen hundred miles in search of justice!

The Governor is instructed to report upon the entire territory to the Interior Department, but as there is no steamer at his command, how can the Governor who is stationed at Sitka know of what is beyond the route of ordinary travel? The distance between Sitka and Unalaska, the seat of a colony and the home of a commissioner, is 1,200 miles. There is no steam communication with this continent save by the occasional vessels of the Alaska Fur Company. Those who need to avail themselves of the district court at Sitka must go first to San Francisco, and return by the same circuitous route, journeying nearly 8,000 miles instead of 2,400!

Any one wishing to visit the Kodiak district or the Aleutian Islands must hire or buy a vessel for the purpose. There is a mail service from San Francisco to Tahiti, another to the Fiji Islands, and one is proposed to the Samoan Islands; yet the Alaska districts, which may easily be made ten-fold more valuable than all the islands of the South Pacific, are outlawed. The Aleutian Islands have no mail service whatever, and the Sitkan Archipelago is only allowed a semi-monthly mail. The United States Treasury, overflowing with gold and silver, cannot afford to be even decently just to pioneers whose long night of six months needs to be cheered by news from their old homes.

“Much as the coast looms up on the map,”—and it looms to the extent of 25,000 miles,—Mr. Elliott can still triumphantly maintain that there is not a single light-house in the whole district. The Russians had a light in the castle at Sitka that was seen ten miles at sea.

No survey was made up to June 30, 1878, and now but one Government vessel is employed in this important work, the appropriation by Congress for the entire coast survey being so small as to leave but \$5,000 for Alaskan waters. At present speed, it will require two more years to complete the survey of the course taken by pleasure-steamers. The next generation may record the completion of Alaska’s entire coast survey. This is a fact, though, twenty years ago, almost the last words of Charles Sumner’s address on Alaska pleaded for an immediate survey of its indented coast, to bring it all within the domain of science and assure to navigation much-needed assistance!

“We have learned enough of the country and climate by this time,” continues Mr. Elliott, “to know that the lands and fishing waters now occupied by the natives of Alaska will never be objects for the cupidity of our people.”

Once more "never!" and already land occupied by natives is appropriated by the invading Caucasian, while the fishing waters, leaving out the burning question of the fur-seal monopoly, are attracting the attention of Atlantic fishermen with a view to colonizing. Why not, when the North Pacific teems with life? Why not, when in Alaskan waters are found seventy-five species of food fish, sixty of which can be put upon civilized breakfast-and dinner-tables? Why not, when the whale, sea-otter, fur-seal, hair-seal, walrus, salmon, cod, halibut, herring make Alaska one of the richest fisheries in the world?

"Indeed, what I have seen," said W. H. Seward at Sitka in 1869, "has almost made me a convert to the theory of some naturalists, that the waters of the globe are filled with stores for the sustenance of animal life surpassing the available productions of the land."

Salmon canneries already exist, and yearly become more numerous. At Killisnoo, five hundred barrels of herring are sometimes caught in a single haul of the seine, each barrel yielding about three gallons of oil. Three hundred thousand gallons of this oil are shipped yearly from this small port.

Then we hear, first, that there are no forests worthy of the name in Alaska; secondly, that though trees grow on the south-eastern coast and also border the rivers, their timber is worthless.

"If ever we utilize the spruce and fir timber on the Sitka Coast," argues Mr. Elliott, "we must encourage and foster the effort in the line of ship-building, for this timber is too gummy and resinous for the ordinary use of house-building and furniture-making."

Having once been an Alaskan industry, ship-building can be so again, for coal, iron, and lumber are next-door neighbors; meanwhile saw-mills multiply, and I have seen very big trees turned into material for house-building. Certainly red and yellow cedar, hemlock, white spruce, alder, and balsam-fir abound in the Sitkan Archipelago. La Perouse refers to "those superb pines fit for the masts of our largest vessels," and Belcher describes "a very fine-grained, bright yellow cypress, . . . which, besides being used in boats, was exported to the Sandwich Islands in return especially for Chinese goods." The most valuable timber is this yellow cedar, which often attains a height of one hundred feet. Professor Davidson says that trees have been found near Sitka one hundred and seventy-five feet high. Of the quality of the wood there are two opinions. Some wise men say it is too

wet for enduring use, while others enthusiastically proclaim our Arctic province to be the great reserve lumber region of the world. At the lowest estimate, the supply of timber is reckoned at 57,000,000 feet, covering 300,000,000 acres. William H. Seward committed himself unreservedly on this point.

"I venture to predict that the North Pacific coast will become a common ship-yard for the American continent, and speedily for the whole world. Europe, Asia, Africa, and even the Atlantic American States have either exhausted or are exhausting their native supplies of timber and lumber. Their last and only resort must be to the North Pacific."

We need not, however, look for a realization of this prophecy until the axe is no longer heard on Puget Sound.

That incorruptible patriot, Charles Sumner, builded even better than he knew when, in 1867, he aided the Secretary of State by delivering an exhaustive speech, which undoubtedly converted Congress to the wisdom of purchasing Alaska. Yet Mr. Elliott, strangely enough, does not hesitate to denounce that admirable *résumé* of facts and possibilities—as valuable to-day as it was twenty years ago. Says Mr. Elliott :

"The great speech of Sumner in favor of the treaty, and which, in the universal ignorance of the subject prevailing in the American mind at the time it was delivered, was hailed as a masterly and truthful presentation of the case, is, in fact, as rich a burlesque upon the country as was Proctor Knott's 'Duluth.' Sumner, however, meant well, but he was easily deceived by the cunning advocates of the purchase. No; no mention was made of these islands [Pribylov] and their fur-seal millions, but infinite stress was laid upon the commerce which would spring up," etc.

To label this exhaustive speech "a burlesque" is the worst possible criticism on the critic's own intelligence. To assert that no mention is made of the Pribylov Islands and "their fur-seal millions" is mere quibbling. Sumner does not actually name the islands, but, as he discusses "furs" at length, states that "the seal has always supplied the largest multitude of furs to the Russian Company," and gives the number of skins in detail that have been sold from time to time by this company, referring on one occasion to "an inexplicable absence of seal skins," Mr. Elliott is certainly indebted to his spleen for his "burlesque." "Amid all the concealment or obscurity which prevails with regard to the revenues of the company," adds Sumner, "it is easy to see that for some time there must be a large amount of valuable furs on this coast." Then he advocates preserving the seals by killing only a specified number yearly, under which economy the supply will vastly increase, as has been the case.

If Sumner, who "meant well," *was* "easily deceived by the cunning advocates of the purchase," on whom falls this accusation of deception? On the citizens of the Pacific coast.

"They were the first to ask for this enlargement of boundary, and will be the first to profit by it," says Sumner. "While others knew the Russian possessions only on the map, they knew them practically in their resources. While others were still indifferent, they were planning how to appropriate Russian peltries and fisheries. This is attested by the resolutions of the Legislature of Washington Territory; also by the exertions at different times of two Senators from California, who, differing in political sentiments and in party relations, *took the initial steps which ended in this treaty.*"

It is barely possible that one, if not both, of these Senators took no pains to enlighten Charles Sumner on the special value of the islands of St. Paul and St. George as seal-rookeries. There may have been method in their silence. Perhaps it was to the interest of certain individuals anxious to obtain a monopoly of the seal-trade, to keep it as much as possible in the background. Perhaps, too, it was merely a coincidence that one of these Senators, John F. Miller, became a member of the Alaska Commercial Company soon after Russian America was transferred to the United States. That Sumner, at the time of his speech, had no idea of the formation of this company is shown by his comments. "It remains to be seen," he says, "into whose hands the commerce [meaning furs] on the Pacific side will fall, now that the whole region will be open to the unchecked enterprise of our citizens."

Sufficient proof has been given, I think, that Sumner more than mentions those wonderful seals which to-day form a most interesting, as well as the largest, part of Alaska's population. That he lays "infinite stress upon the commerce that would spring up" is not true, if by "commerce" is meant trading outside of peltries, fisheries, mines, and lumber. Sumner pictures Alaska's resources as known in 1867, and but lightly dwells on the mines, which are a recent development. But when Sumner refers to the fisheries as "the most important of all" Alaskan products, is he not more of a prophet than his critics?

"What even are sea-otter skins," he asks, "by the side of that product of the sea, incalculable in amount, which contributes to the sustenance of the human family?" The sea-otter has almost disappeared; the seal will be exterminated if promiscuously slaughtered, as is probable when the present or a similar monopoly of the Pribilof Islands ceases; but on forever go the

salmon and cod and halibut and herring, this last "one of those natural products whose use has decided the destiny of nations." Sumner sees Alaska supplying not only the Pacific States and Central and South America with fish, but also China and Japan. "It does not seem impossible for an energetic and commercial people to find a market here of inconceivable magnitude which will dwarf the original fur-trade with China, that was once so tempting." Possible? It is more than probable. Already there is a vision of Sumner's prediction, when "the beautiful bidarka will give way to the fishing-smack, the clipper, and the steamer. All things will be changed in form and proportion, but the original aptitude for the sea will remain; a practical race of intrepid navigators will swarm the coast, ready for any enterprise of business or patriotism. Commerce will find new arms; the country new defenders; the National flag new hands to bear it aloft." The statesman who advocated the purchase of Russian America, who named this "great land" Alaska, who so clearly foretold its history, can sleep peacefully while narrow souls attack his memory.

The "government" of Alaska, though better than ever before, is ridiculous, anomalous, unjust, and fraudulent. The territory has been acquired under false pretences, as can be shown by the third article of the treaty with Russia.

"The inhabitants of the ceded territory, according to their choice, reserving their natural allegiance, may return to Russia within three years; but if they should prefer to remain in the ceded territory, they, with the exception of uncivilized native tribes, shall be admitted to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States, and shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion."

What are the "rights, advantages, and immunities" of American citizens? This question is best answered by quoting Sumner for the last time. Addressing Congress, he says:

"Your best work and most important endowment will be the republican government which, looking to a long future, you will organize with schools free to all, and with equal laws, before which every citizen will stand erect in the consciousness of manhood. Here will be a motive power without which coal itself will be insufficient. Here will be a source of wealth more inexhaustible than any fisheries. Bestow such a government, and you will bestow what is better than all you can receive, whether quintals of fish, sands of gold, choicest fur, or most beautiful ivory."

Congress has bestowed nothing of this sort. Two generations have grown up in crass ignorance. Schools have been conspicuous by their absence, and no man can stand erect upon the bit of land that should be his, because there are no land-laws.

Indignantly protesting, the Hon. J. G. Swan, of Port Townsend, Washington Territory, exclaims:

"The country is not Indian country. It is ours by right of purchase from Russia. We obtained the fee-simple to the whole of Alaska by that purchase, and there is not one word in the whole of that treaty which reserved any right of joint ownership to either Indians or any other people. If the Government desires to open up Alaska to settlement, the same inducements should be offered as were held out in early days to settlers in Oregon and Washington Territory."

Like the dog in the manger, Congress will do nothing for Alaska, nor will it permit Alaska to do anything for herself locally, or at Washington through a delegate. Yet, in 1890, two islands of this despised and neglected province will have paid into the United States Treasury \$6,340,000—within one million of Alaska's entire purchase!

It is estimated, on good authority, that Alaska now sends out yearly double the wealth brought in, her industries for 1887 being valued as follows :

Fur trade.....	\$2,500,000
Gold (entire product)	1,350,000
Fisheries.....	3,000,000
Lumber and walrus ivory	100,000
<hr/>	
Total.....	\$6,950,000

Ivan Petrov, special government agent, states that Alaska,

"with its savage population of over 30,000, represents a larger volume of trade than any other portion of the United States inhabited by uncivilized tribes, even without reference to such mineral wealth as has been or may be developed within its limits, or to the net revenue derived by the Government above all its expenditure for Alaska from the lease of the fur-seal reservation."

This is the country that General McDowell would have given away; that Congress can barely discover on the map!

"What, Mr. Seward, do you consider the most important measure of your political career?" asked a friend.

"The purchase of Alaska; but it will take the people a generation to find it out."

The people have not yet found it out. Patience, long-suffering Alaska!

KATE FIELD.